

Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Spring 2004

SWORDFISH FISHERY PLAN

RECEIVES WAVES OF SUPPORT

At its 121st meeting in November, the Council unanimously approved a plan to re-establish Hawai'i's swordfish industry with a model fishery that includes new measures to protect endangered sea turtles.

Under the plan, Hawai'i's longline fleet would be required to apply specific fishing technologies to decrease the accidental hooking of sea turtles. In addition, conservation measures would be implemented at beaches in the Western Pacific region where the highly migratory turtles have important nesting grounds.

Concern over the impacts of commercial fishing on endangered populations of sea turtles has led the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to keep Hawai'i's swordfish fishery virtually closed since 2000. The new plan would re-open the fishery by allowing a yearly total of 2,120 days of fishing. This number constitutes approximately half of the annual fishing effort expended prior to the closure of the Hawai'i-based swordfish fishery. The plan provides that all interested members of Hawai'i's longline fleet would be eligible to receive an equal share of swordfish fishing days, which would be distributed by NMFS. No new limits would be applied to tuna longlining; however, a recent southern time/area closure affecting the tuna fishery would be removed.

NMFS is reviewing the new plan, and if it is approved, regulations to implement this new management regime are expected to go into effect on April 1, 2004.

"The combination of conservation and technological measures makes this plan very innovative," said Kitty Simonds, the Council's Executive Director. "It is our expectation that international fleets will note its practicality

and effectiveness and adopt similar measures. When this happens, we will have in place a comprehensive global plan, which will be a major boost to sea turtle recovery."

Hawai'i's longliners make up 3 percent of the entire longline fleet in the Pacific Ocean. Throughout the three year swordfish fishery ban, many Hawai'i longliners expressed concern that the closure did nothing to address interactions between turtles and foreign vessels, whose swordfish catch is often exported to consumers throughout the United States.

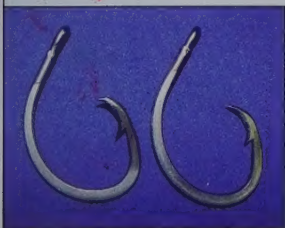
"Hawai'i longliners have a long record of working with the Council to develop mitigation measures that are effective in reducing harm to marine life," said Council member and Hawai'i Longline Association (HLA) president Sean Martin, who noted that in the 1980's Hawai'i's longliners were in the forefront of the effort to have Pacific tuna stocks protected under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. "In regards to turtles, we are now in a very good position to model practices that will quickly be exported to other nations where more needs to be done to protect endangered species," said Martin.

The Council's efforts to craft a plan that would become the foundation of a new model swordfish fishery began late last year after a federal judge's ruling invalidated NMFS' biological opinion concerning the status and management of sea turtles. The ruling also eliminated fishery regulations based on the opinion, including the ban on swordfishing. It also invalidated the biological opinion's "incidental take statement," which exempts vessel operators who accidentally hook or entangle sea turtles from legal prosecution. NMFS, the HLA and Earthjustice promptly requested a temporary reinstatement of these regulations out of concern that liability for a single incidental turtle catch could lead to the shutdown of the entire longline industry.



In This Issue

Swordfish Fishery Plan Receives Wave of Support.....	1
Roy Morioka: Savvy Strategist With Hawaiian Salt	2
New Statistics Tell the Story of Recreational Fishing.....	2
Regional Fishery Management Councils Meet in D.C.	4
Bottomfish Top the Agenda at New Zealand Meeting	5
Council Helps APEC in Combating Marine Debris Problem	6
Turtle Conservation Receives Council Support.....	7
Council Workshops.....	7
Council Calendar.....	8
Western Pacific Recipe	8



LIBRARY
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
2570 Dole St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

Continued on page 3

REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCILS MEET IN D.C.

Members of the Western Pacific Council family participated in a conference in Washington D.C. that spotlighted challenges and achievements in carrying out federal fisheries law.

Managing Our Nation's Fisheries, Past, Present and Future, held November 13-16, 2003, was sponsored by the eight regional Councils and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The conference marked a timely juncture, as Congress prepares to consider re-authorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Act, enacted 25 years ago as the basis for the nation's system of fisheries management.

Along with regional Council representatives, the conference brought together top local, state and federal fisheries administrators, scientists, representatives from universities, US Coast Guard, US Ocean Commission, the recreational and commercial fishing industries, environmental organizations and other NGOs—more than 700 participants in all, for the purpose of exchanging information and educating media and policymakers about the complex process of fisheries management. Sen. Ted Stevens' keynote speech urged fishermen to become more involved in ocean management. Panel-led discussions showcased various regional perspectives on critical issues, such as protection of ocean resources and protected species, prevention of bycatch and overfishing and the application of new data and technologies.

The Council's Senior Scientist Paul Dalzell reviewed steps taken in the Western Pacific region to mitigate interactions between longline vessels and endangered seabirds resulting from gear modifications designed and tested by Hawai'i longliners. Recent trials with a new side-setting technique, where the longline is set from the side of the vessel instead of the stern, have shown that seabird interactions can be reduced to almost none. The underwater setting chute, which sets baited hooks 17 feet underwater out of sight and reach of the diving seabirds, was tested in waters north of Hawai'i. More than 6,000 baited hooks were set during the experiment, and no seabirds were killed. Other methods such as thawed blue-dyed bait, weighted hooks, line shooters, night setting and strategic offal discard (discarding fish or fish parts after on-board processing to distract birds from baited hooks) can achieve up to 90% reduction in seabird/longline interactions.

Dalzell's presentation was one of several that highlighted a designated conference theme, described as the so-called "public perception gap" affecting fisheries management. Many panelists

called for improving public outreach efforts to address the criticism of fisheries management. Many expressed concern that recent court cases and clashes between environmental and commercial interests have overshadowed the real work of keeping the nation's fisheries safe and healthy.

In commenting on the disparity between public perception and the reality of fisheries management, Dalzell said: "Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council is directed to make use of the best science, and this translates into a highly precautionary management approach." Dalzell pointed to the Council's support of strict limits on commercial fishing licenses as an example of the Council's willingness to put a high premium on the sustainability of resources.

The Council's work in safeguarding Hawai'i's coral reefs was highlighted at the conference by Dr. Jeff Polovina, Acting Director of NMFS' Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. Polovina took part in a panel discussion on ecosystem-based management. According to Polovina, ecosystem-based management presents a unique set of challenges for fisheries management. "The focus used to be on single species. Now, management decisions must address an entire web of inter-related life forms," he said. He described how the Council took the initiative in applying this approach to managing Hawai'i's coral reefs. Using extensive research sponsored by the National Marine Fisheries Service,

the Council developed its Coral Reef Ecosystems Fishery Management Plan. This marked the first comprehensive application of the ecosystem concept by a fisheries Council. In follow-up comments to his conference presentation, Polovina said the regionalism of the fishery management Councils provides a tailored approach to understanding and managing unique and complex ecosystems.

The well-attended conference received widespread media attention. For more information about the conference, visit www.managingfisheries.org.

Pacific Islands Fishery News

is published by the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813. All rights reserved. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Telephone: +1 808 522-8220

Fax: +1 808 522-8226

Email: info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov

<http://www.wpcouncil.org>

Chair Roy Morioka
(Hawaii)

Vice Chairs

Frank McCoy
(American Samoa)

Manuel Duenas
(Guam)

Frank Farm (Hawaii)

Benigno Sablan
(Northern Mariana Islands)

Executive Director

Kitty M. Simonds



Managing Our Nation's Fisheries, Past, Present and Future. Some of the participants pictured here from left to right: Eric Gilman, Paul Dalzell, Roy Morioka, Manuel Cruz, Kitty Simonds, Ray Tulafono, Frank McCoy, Mark Mitsuyasu, and Paul Bartram.

BOTTOMFISH

TOP THE AGENDA

AT NEW ZEALAND MEETING



A workshop on bottomfish fisheries took place in November 2003, at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. It was the first time in approximately 20 years such an international gathering of experts had the opportunity to discuss the management of deep slope snapper and grouper species common off island coasts. Hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the workshop brought together experts to review and improve resource assessment and management methods for bottomfish fisheries.

Hawai'i was well represented by several participants who contributed to the workshop. Council staff member, Mark Mitsuyasu, provided a look at the federal approach to managing bottomfish fisheries in waters surrounding the Hawaiian Islands. Walter Ikehara of the Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (HDAR) described the State's role in the management and monitoring of bottomfish. Robert Moffitt of NMFS' Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center delivered his perspective on stock assessment methodologies used in Hawai'i fisheries.

Around Hawai'i and other tropical islands, bottomfish species inhabit deep slope areas (90-300 feet) of high relief just beyond the fringing reefs. These species are also relatively vulnerable to overexploitation owing to the species' slow growth and late age at first maturity. The higher the percentage of immature fish caught by a fishery the greater the possibility that over-exploitation could have long-term adverse effects on a population.

Several participating countries, (Rarotonga, Fiji and Timor), have newly emerging bottomfish fisheries and looked toward the developed fisheries, such as Hawai'i and Australia, for management examples. The New Zealand workshop highlighted the idea that new fisheries must be regulated early and then be allowed to expand in a slow controlled manner. As workshop participants discussed, new methods for data collection should be developed specifically considering the diverse structure and deep ocean location of these species. This involves overcoming inherent technical and scientific challenges as well as the economic challenge of maintaining cost efficiency. The cost of bottomfish data collection is relatively high, given the small nature of these fisheries. Participants agreed that collaboration in the production of generic logbooks should move forward on a regional basis. This will support consistent data collection from newer bottomfish fisheries. Regional collaboration also is needed in conducting bottomfish stock assessments.

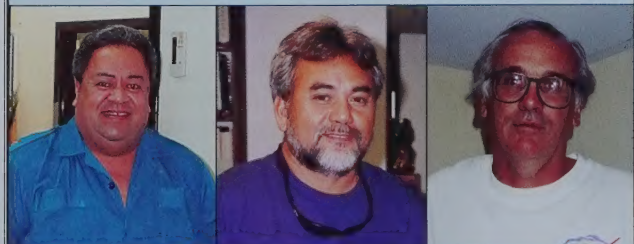
The New Zealand workshop served as a "warm-up" session for a bottomfish stock assessment workshop organized in January by the Council in Honolulu. The Hawai'i workshop brought together an international expert panel to review and assess available fishery dependent and independent information, fishery monitoring programs, management regimes and stock assessment methods. The workshop was held

from Jan. 13-16, 2004 at the Council office and work center in Honolulu. The Council, HDAR and NMFS hosted the workshop to set a course of action for completing stock assessments for bottomfish resources around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and CNMI. The panel also made recommendations for improving data collection programs and identifying research priorities. Recommendations include:

- Update estimates of maximum sustainable yield;
- Add recreational catches to the data time series;
- Implement and expand tagging program to gather life history information and determine the extent of fish movements;
- Develop strategies to provide meaningful stock assessments given the presence of no-take MPAs;
- Modify data reporting systems to obtain more accurate information on fishing location;
- Investigate the potential existence of grouper spawning aggregations, and if confirmed, consider time/area closures.

A draft report of findings will be presented to the 85th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, February 24-26, 2004 in the Council office hearing room.

NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS



Stephen Haleck

Manuel Duenas

Sean Martin

COUNCIL HELPS APEC IN COMBATING MARINE DEBRIS PROBLEM

While on a fishing trip in her boat near French Frigate Shoals last spring, Timm Timoney was dismayed to hear the noise of a struggling engine. "I could tell right away the prop was wrapped up in gillnet," recalled Timoney who is a bottomfish permit holder in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Timoney did what she is accustomed to doing in such situations: "You get out your dive knife, drop down and cut the vessel free," she said, also adding that it's this kind of experience which has made Hawai'i-based fishermen vigilant participants when it comes to cleaning up derelict fishing nets and other types of marine debris. "We're talking about huge masses of monofilament. It damages vessels and ruins fishing gear, and, worst of all, it can hurt marine life," said Timoney.

The costly and destructive problem of marine debris continues to be a matter of concern for the Council. As part of its continuing effort to mitigate marine debris impacts on fishery resources, the Council helped sponsor and organize the Derelict Fishing Gear and Related Marine Debris Seminar, held by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) Fisheries Working Group January 13-16, 2004. Other major sponsors of the seminar include the U.S. Department of Commerce, Hawai'i Sea Grant, and U.S. Department of State.

The seminar fostered information exchange between members of APEC and individuals representing fishing industries, fisheries management, recycling and disposal industries, research and scientific programs, international organizations, NGO's, and government agencies. The seminar addressed marine debris issues through a series of panel discussions focused on science and policy, fishing gear and fishing practices, recovery ports and disposal, and domestic and international regulatory structures. Regional case studies highlighting specific experiences with marine debris in the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, Korea, Australia and Taiwan were also presented. A representative from the Korean Maritime Institute described a government incentive program that pays fishermen approximately \$5 for every 40 pounds of marine debris brought back to port.

Port disposal for marine debris has become a particular concern for the Council, following reports from fishermen who say that local facilities are inadequate. "If you go down to the harbor, just about any day of the week, you'll find a fishing vessel hauling in netting that it happened to find floating in the water, but there's no good way to get rid of it," said Sean Martin.



Hawai'i fisherman Sean Martin encountered this huge mass of netting floating in Hawaiian waters. He hauled it onto his boat and delivered it for disposal to Honolulu harbor. Martin says fishermen typically make the effort to pick up marine debris which can cause harm to vessels, gear and marine life.

According to Martin, fishermen routinely take the initiative to scoop up huge masses of floating debris, but after docking, they find no receptacles available for the non-biodegradable material. Pacific ocean currents near Hawai'i add to the dilemma by bringing in debris from faraway sources, Martin noted.

Participants visited Hawaii Islands Recycling, Inc., which in the past cut nets collected from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands into smaller sizes for incineration at Honolulu City and County's H-Power facility. Unfortunately, Hawaii Metals Recycling, Inc., which chopped the nets for free, can only process the debris on a limited basis. Finding creative ways to recycle and reuse marine debris is greatly needed. Those with first-hand experience in the marine debris problem say the multinational APEC seminar was a key step towards a solution that must include local, national and international cooperation in order to be effective.

TURTLE CONSERVATION

RECEIVES COUNCIL SUPPORT

The Council is supporting a new conservation program focused on stocks of leatherback and loggerhead turtles known to interact with Hawai'i-based fishing vessels. The aim is to protect endangered sea turtles throughout their entire life cycle. As an adjunct to their fishery management measures, the Council's conservation efforts focus on reducing direct harvest, habitat degradation and other threats that affect turtle nesting beaches and foraging habitats.

This comprehensive approach to turtle conservation follows the recommendations of the Council's Turtle Advisory Committee (TAC), a seven-member group of experts in sea turtle biology, research, and conservation. On the advice of the TAC, the Council is launching turtle conservation projects in collaboration with non-gov-



Colin Limpus conducting education and outreach at Mon Repos loggerhead nesting beach in Bundaberg, Australia. The sea turtle eggs were collected and transported to a safer location to increase their chance of survival.



Members of the Council's Sea Turtle Advisory Committee. Pictured left to right are: Peter Dutton, George Balazs, Colin Limpus, Jeff Polovina, Milani Chaloupka

ernmental organizations with ties to local regions. These projects involve long-term management and include the following:

- In turtle nesting beaches of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) and neighboring Papua New Guinea, turtle eggs are being relocated away from erosion-prone areas and are also being protected from feral pig predation and human poachers;
- In turtle foraging grounds of coastal Western Papua, pressures of direct harvesting of adult leatherback turtles are being studied and addressed;
- In waters off of Baja, Mexico, researchers are collaborating with Mexican fishermen to reduce their incidental capture of juvenile loggerhead turtles in the halibut coastal gillnet fishery in Baja, Mexico.

The Council also continues to coordinate the development of a regional sea turtle tagging database which is a critical step towards understanding population trends for Pacific sea turtles. The second database meeting convened in December 2003, at the Mon Repos loggerhead nesting beach in Bundaberg, Australia focused on database development and included a unique opportunity to view loggerhead conservation in action. Special thanks are extended to generous hosts at the Queensland Parks Authority and to regional collaborators for another successful workshop to promote regional sea turtle conservation.

For more information on the Council's sea turtle conservation projects, contact Irene Kinan, Sea Turtle Program Coordinator at 522-7495 or e-mail Irene.Kinan@noaa.gov

WORKSHOP CALENDAR

The Council has or will host several fishery-related workshops in partnership with NOAA Fisheries in 2004:

Workshop on the Development of Bottomfish Resource Assessment Methodologies for the U.S. Central and Western Pacific Fisheries. The purpose of this workshop was to improve data collection and analyses to achieve reliable resource assessments. **January 13-16, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

APEC Seminar on Abandoned Marine Fishing Gear: The goal of this seminar was to raise awareness and promote a meaningful exchange of information on science and policy, gear and disposal issues, and current regulatory structures. **January 13-16, 2004, East-West Center, Honolulu.**

Reef Fish Stock Assessment: The aim of the meeting will be to improve stock assessment of coral reef ecosystem resources in the Western Pacific Region. **February 10-13, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

2nd International Sea Turtle Workshop: This workshop will bring together sea turtle experts to continue dialogue regarding sea turtle conservation and management to promote recovery. **May 17-21, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Workshop: The goal of this meeting is to describe current models, explain data requirements, and examine management and policy options. **July 26-30, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

3rd Scientific Symposium on Resource Investigations in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands: This symposium will provide a review and synthesis of recent scientific developments in ecological, biological, oceanographic, and resource assessment research in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, identify knowledge gaps and delineate future research needs. **November 2-4, 2004, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu.** (Open to the public)

Contact the Council office at (808) 522-8220 or log onto www.wpcouncil.org for more information.

COUNCIL CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

10-13	Reef Fish Stock Assessment Workshop, Council office, Honolulu	1-5	US South Pacific Tuna Treaty Consultation, Tuvalu		Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, Bali	22-23	Ko Olina Boat Show and Ocean Expo, Ko Olina, Honolulu
15-20	2004 Ocean Research Conference, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu	1-5	Aquaculture 2004, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu	20-22	Coral Reef Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	24-27	55th Tuna Conference, Lake Arrowhead, CA
22-29	24th Sea Turtle Symposium, San Jose, Costa Rica	16-19	Indian Ocean-South-East Asian Marine Turtle MoU, Bangkok	23	Crustaceans Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	30 -6/4	PACON 2004, Eleventh Pacific Conference on Marine Science & Technology, Waikiki Beach Marriott, Honolulu
24-26	85th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	22-25	122nd Council Meeting, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu	27-29	Pelagics Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	JUNE	
24-25	US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting, Washington, D.C.	APRIL		MAY		7-18	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Lima
		8	Precious Corals Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	2-6,	4th World Fisheries Congress, Vancouver, BC	8-10	86th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
		12-16	Annual Council Chair /Executive Directors Meeting, Kauai	5-6	Bottomfish Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu	15-18	123rd Council Meeting, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu
		19-23	Preparatory Conference for the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly	17-21	2nd International Sea Turtle Workshop, Council office, Honolulu	28 -7/2	International Coral Reef Symposium, Okinawa

MARCH

Recipe Misozuke Opah (Serves 4-5)

INGREDIENTS

When preparing this recipe, look for the opah belly portion which is more marbled and flavorful than the top fillet portion.

2-1/2 to 3 pounds fillets sliced into 2-3 oz. portions
Kosher salt

Misozuke

12 ounces white miso
3 ounces mirin
7 ounces sugar
1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, finely chopped

PREPARATION

Salt fish portions with kosher salt, 1/2 tablespoon per fillet, on both sides. Let sit for 60 minutes to draw out excess water. Combine misozuke ingredients and marinate fish for 2 days in refrigerator.

Wipe misozuke off with a paper towel leaving light coating. Bake fish on a sheet pan at 350 degrees for 5-10 minutes on each side, or until fillet begin to brown. Serves 4-5.



Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 USA

Dr. Jeffrey Polovina
NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822-2396

